

Students Augment Park With StoryWalk

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY KAREN BOSSICK

The third-graders are used to getting a face full of water when the bucket in the splash playground turns upside down at Jimmy's Garden.

Now they have a new reason to visit the park.

A hundred third-graders from Hailey Elementary installed pages of a story along the sidewalk lining the park at Hailey's Second Avenue and East Croy Street on Friday.

Then, small groups huddled around each page posted on a stake to read the prose and look at the picture, just as they hope other kids will during the month the StoryWalk will be up along the sidewalk.

The project was instigated after the third-graders decided to make the Sun Valley Center for the Arts the beneficiary of \$25 that had been given each third-grader by the WOW-students program. WOW gives students in kindergarten through 12th grade money with the simple directive that they give the money to a project that will benefit the community. The idea is to teach kids about philanthropy.

StoryWalk was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vt., as an innovative way to get children and adults to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time.

They usually use laminated pages from actual books, such as "If You Give a Pig a Pancake," "Weezer Changes the World," "I Took My Frog to the Library," "Tracks in the Snow" and "The

Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything." They've been installed in 45 states and Germany, Canada, England and Bermuda, usually spaced out over a distance of a half-mile.

Katelyn Ziegler learned of StoryWalk while working for a museum in Shelburne, Vt.

There, a StoryWalk about a duck was created in conjunction with a 5k walk for Alzheimer's.

"Anne Ferguson e-mailed me after reading that we were doing a StoryWalk. She was so pleased we were bringing it to Ketchum and she noted that ours was different in that we were creating our own story. She said she had never thought of that before," said Ziegler, director of education and humanities for the SVCA.

Since all five third-grade classes agreed to pool their donations, this particular project resulted in a \$2,500 donation to the SVCA, pointed out WOW's Morley Gordon.

The students selected to give their philanthropic funds to the SVCA, said student Corey Trevino, "because we thought they needed some help."

"We learned that helping a lot of people, helping something that benefits a lot of people, is better than helping just one," added Chase Rushton.

In the process of creating this project, the students learned how public art is "being generous to the community." And they learned the importance of parks in offering families a place to play and exercise.

"But you still have work to do," teacher Danica Robrahn told them as they gathered at

Jimmy's Garden. "It's your job as a class to make the story make sense as you figure out where to place the different pages. Then we're going to read our StoryWalk for the very first time. We'll be the first to read it."

A dozen-plus parents took pictures as students like Monzerrath Cornejo, Tenney Barrow, Ashley Espinoza, Xavier Vega Grimes, Grier Brown, Luke Brown, Ryan Ferguson and Brisa Reyes took turns pounding pages into the ground.

"My son Alex was so excited I had to come see for myself," said Mariabel Vallejo.

Some of the pages talked about experiences that can be had in a park: "We were playing games like sharks and minos (sic) when all of a sudden we got drenched with sweat," one said.

Others talked about how parks get built: "The nice mayor asked all the school kids to volunteer to build a big, lovely park," said one.

Still others talked about the benefits: "We think parks are



Xavier Vega Grimes shows off one of the pages.

important because they give us a place to exercise and get our energy out and make new friends and have fun with our family and our dog," said one.

Tayzia Mittelstadt said she liked "pretty much everything"

about the project: "I liked the art that we did. I liked that our friends got together to do something together. And I liked that we did something for the whole community."

105

Carri's
Hair Care & Day Spa

788-3056

Open House